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Association Evaluation – Association of Management Consultants

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The following is a evaluation of the association's effectiveness from international criterion and standards deployed by the American Society of Association Executives, Washington, D.C.

Criterion One: MISSION AND OBJECTIVES

Purpose : The association has a clear and positive statement of purposes for which it exists. The association must demonstrate that it fulfills its mission, goals, and objectives through a strategic long-range plan.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1.Mission Statement is clear and positive.								x		
2.Bylaws include mission and objectives.										x
3.Member are aware of mission.						x				
4.Legal Charter exists .										x
5.Strategic Plan includes method for implementation.										x
6.Strategic Plan is applied as guide to yearly planning.								x		
7.Job Descriptions exist.								x		
8.Needs Assessments and surveys are conducted.						x				

Score : 67/80 (very good)

Comments and recommendations:

Mission statement is effective but can/**should include a public benefit purpose.**

Bylaws well written but suggest consent items where Board approval is required for administrative matters such as approval of new members. **It is recommended that the association review its requirements for full membership and consider linking full membership to certification and professional training, marking a transition from a membership association to a professional society.**

Legal Charter satisfies requirements

Strategic planning is actively used in planning and expansion of the association. However, it will be a key document, with updates, in managing a number of proposed activities for the near future (such as certification training.)

Job descriptions for both volunteers and staff are excellent. Suggest review of Presidency ( Board) duties and add job description. Required signed acceptance of position responsibility for members of Presidency.

Active efforts have been made to conduct member surveys but with low responses, reflecting a passive attitude than can be improved but also does NOT reflect major dissent by members about the associations governance and operations.

## Criterion Two : LEADERSHIP

Purpose : Evaluate the effectiveness of the associations elected leaders and chief paid executive. Words and actions reflect strong leadership

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1. Prevailing culture reflects consensus, trust, and confidence							x			
2. Leadership is perceived as a shared function									x	
3. Development of new leaders					x					
4. Members feel listened to					x					
5. Leaders engage in expanding networks							x			
6. Leaders communicate to public and govt. on behalf of members					x					
7. Leaders adapt to change and are committed to progress									x	

Score : 47/70 (good)

### Comments and recommendations:

Observation and interviews with the chief elected officer (President) and chief staff officer (Executive Director), supported by several interviews with members and other elected officers support the finding of strong leadership, and a strong collegial, shared relationship between the chief elected and chief staff officer.

However, the leadership style raises some concerns as it relates to the Presidency (Board), Committees, and membership at large. **It is critical that an atmosphere of collegiality, trust, and respect be established and maintained. Key statements on conflict of interest and other policies have been forwarded for consideration.** Persuasion and cooperation is the key to motivating an effective volunteer leadership team and enthusiasm among the members. **In working with the members, remember the old adage that 'the customer is always right!'**

There is a concern that the association more deliberately develop new leaders, reinforcing the existing culture and perpetuating it as time passes. It is recommended that orientation sessions for new officers be initiated as they come on board after election. It was also suggested that persons interested in the Presidency demonstrate their commitment to service by participating in projects or work of a committee.

Despite discouraging results of previous surveys, it is important that the effort be periodically repeated as key method of 'listening' to the members. Personal visits by members of the Presidency, suggested by a member, can be a very important addition.

The recent engagement of AMC leaders was effective in developing relationships with the European and international management consulting associations and resulting in international certification.

An area for improvement is leadership communications to the public and government on behalf of its members. The recent acquisition of a staff person with appropriate skills and experience may/should result in a significant improvement.

### Criterion Three : GOVERNANCE

Purpose: Is the governance organized to provide democratic, representative, and effective guidance to the policies and direction of the association?

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1. Representative, rotating officers, board									x	
2. Duties clearly defined					x					
3. Governing body meets regularly, monitors operations								x		
4. Agendas distributed, minutes executed								x		
5. Membership informed of Presidency actions									x	
6. Appropriate legal, financial advisors						x				
7. A thorough orientation is conducted for new officers					x					

Score : 50/70 (good)

#### Comments and recommendations

The election process, terms of office, and rotating of officers, as described by Bylaws, are excellent. However, written policies consistent with the bylaws and approved by the Presidency are an important method of supplementing the bylaws (and do not require the detailed procedures of a bylaws change. One such policy recommended are definitions of the duties and responsibilities of the President and the Presidency.

It was noted that one member of the Presidency, Goran Ilic, was from a province away from Zagreb (Osijek). **It is recommended that a policy be adopted which insures that at least one member of the Presidency is located in a province other than Zagreb.**

The size of the Presidency is excellent as a senior management group. The Evaluator is concerned, however, that some means to gain greater representation of interests and geography without diluting the effectiveness of the Presidency. The Croatian Exporters have a Board of Managers that meets every several months to review the activity of the association while they too have a Presidency that makes overall policy decisions. **AMC might consider an Advisory Board of 20-24 persons to broaden the representation of members in oversight.**

The Presidency is reminded that routine business of Presidency meeting, as mentioned heretofore, can focus on major issues if items such as approval of new members are handled by pre-meeting faxes – allowing 'consent' of routine administrative matters.

It was noted that the association has a professional financial advisor but not an attorney. I don't believe an attorney is not required at the time but should be regularly reconsidered as operations and relations with other entities become complex.

**It is strongly recommended that a formal orientation of new officers, participated in by all members of the Presidency, be held annual, perhaps right after the Annual Meeting.**

#### Criterion Four : ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE AND DOCUMENTS

Purpose : Does the association have documented evidence indicating an effective structure and adequate documentation?

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1. Structure reflects mission.										x
2. Documentation of compliance with bylaws. and procedure for amending.										x
3. Policies and procedure include job descriptions.					x					
4. An organization chart shows functional relationships.									x	
5. Responsibilities of committees are defined.					x					
6. A clear program of orientation for incoming officers and staff .						x				
7. Officer and committee reports are communicated effectively.									x	

Score : (50/70) Good

#### Comments and recommendations:

It is recommended that a policy defining the duties and reporting responsibilities of the President, Presidency, and committees be further developed. Also, the previous recommendation of orientation of new officers and staff is an important area for improvement. Overall, it should be stated that the structure of the association accurately reflects its mission.

#### Criterion Five : PROGRAMS, SERVICES AND ACTIVITIES

Purpose : The association resource has developed is activities and structure to effectively deliver programs, services, and activities.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1.The association has an annual plan of action with clear program priorities.							x			
2.The annual plan considers resources and staff to implents psrogram plans.							x			
3. Committees and staff actively offer ideas.							x			
4. Officers plan and approve programs, staff is responsible for implementation.									x	
5. Appropriate reonsibililty and authority are defined.							x			
6. The association involves members through surveys and committee input.										x
7. The association adequately markets it programs										x
8. The association utilizes its volunteers effectively.										x

Score : 48/80 (good)

#### Criterion Five Comments and recommendations:

The association engages in comprehensive planning, and considering the limitations of resources, seems to align resources with priorities. The division of work with officer planning and staff implementation appears quite clear, but can be improved with policy job descriptions of officers as previously recommended. Despite failed efforts to survey members, it is important to involve the membership in program development. **The suggestion that Presidency members make visitations to series of members is a very good idea.** Samples of promotion and the newsletter seem to adequately market programs. **A major area for improvement is engaging members as volunteers in association activity, a good antidote for the existing member apathy.**

The President has an excellent proposal to develop a seminar for training management consultants in how to communicate with clients.

The monthly Forums, an open program meeting for all members, should be regularly resumed as a significant means of reaching and energizing members with good programs. Consider utilizing panels of members on topics of high interest for programming.

**A new project, training for certification, by teams of persons who were recently trained and internationally certified, could offer a major expansion of program service. While not professional trainers, certified persons could teach in teams and in three-day segments of the two-week full program. By at least the end of two years, a substantial number of members and apply for and succeed in international certification.**

#### **Criterion Six : ASSOCIATION STAFF**

Purpose : To evaluate the structure, operation, and adequacy of the staff according to the mission and opportunities of the association.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1. Organization Chart and structure are defined.									x	
2. Staff job descriptions fully define responsibility and authority of staff.									x	
3. Size and experience of staff is adequate.				x						
4. Salaries and benefits are adequate.				x						
5. Personnel policies are fair and consistent.									x	
6. Annual evaluation of staff is fair and consistent.									x	
7. Procedures manuals are maintained.				x						
8. Staff are trained and cross-trained.									x	

Score : 57/80 (good)

#### Criterion Six Comments and recommendations :

Staff job descriptions and organizational structure for a small staff are well defined. Salaries appear adequate for attracting appropriate personnel. However, one of three staff is a volunteer and should be regularly paid as soon as possible. Also, given a growth in activity and resources, one or two additional staff may be readily justified.

**It is recommended that seminars and projects include a 15 per cent allowance for administration as an indirect cost of office and staff. This allowance is typical for associations. Dedicated staff for an activity would be an additional direct cost. As activity increases, support can develop for additional staff.**

Although the Executive Director is under a three-year contract, it is appropriate that she is evaluated annually (as is being done) and that she evaluate staff. However, her evaluation may not jeopardize her contract unless for very specific cause, written as a previously approved policy, is given.

Given a small staff and a large work load, extensive procedures manuals are not expected but should be added as the association expands. The staff reflects adequate training and cross- training.

#### **Criterion Seven : ASSOCIATION FINANCES**

Purpose : Does a sound Business Plan, linked to the Strategic Plan, assure effective sustainable services into future? Do policies and controls assure financial integrity?

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1. Three-year financial planning is linked to the strategic plan and sustainable.					x					
2. Dues and fees are regularly reviewed.		x								
3. International accounting standards are followed.						x				
4. The Presidency approves the annual budget.								x		
5. The budget is used to evaluate financial performance and adjusted as needed.									x	
6. The Presidency and members receive regular reports.								x		
7. There is evidence of prudent internal controls, an annual audit is conducted, and reports filed.									x	
8. Planning includes creation of adequate reserves.			x							

Score : 61/80 (good)

#### Comments and recommendations :

While financial planning is conducted and linked to the strategic plan, a heavy reliance of 'project funding' raises questions of future sustainability. The small share of dues revenue and modest income from seminars to total income is a concern.

**The positioning of the association to significantly expand its base of certified members, through the previously recommended training, is an excellent opportunity**

#### Association Finances continued

**to review the dues base and qualifications for full membership. I would propose that in two years, full membership (those eligible to vote and hold office) be limited to persons who are either certified or enrolled in certification training. All other members would be 'Associates' (non-voting). At some point, a survey of members might indicate a willingness to pay significantly higher dues to support a commitment to specific, expanded or new services and programs.**

**You might find a significant difference between members interested in certification and those who prefer the association as it is.**

**This transition, if enacted, would market the emergence of AMC from a membership organization into a professional society, internationally recognized as such.**

The overall administration of finance, for a small office operation, is satisfactory. The primary concern is for financial growth and sustainability.

#### **Criterion Eight : MEMBERSHIP DEVELOPMENT**

Purpose : Is membership administration well-organized and is membership development effective and producing results?

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1. Are member records accurate and adequate.							x			
2. Does the association have a realistic idea of potential.				x						
3. Is there an effective membership development.									x	
4. Membership application is effective.							x			
5. There is an active program to retain members.								x		
6. Member satisfaction is documented.			x							
7. Applications are promptly handled.								x		
8. The benefits of membership are effectively communicated to existing and potential members.							x			

Score : 57/80 (good)

#### Commentary and recommendations

The association has enjoyed excellent growth in membership during the past year, from 120 to 180 members. It has an estimated potential of 500 members. Member retention, a true reflection of member satisfaction, is quite high – with the loss of only one to two members per month.

**It is observed that the Bylaw requiring the President and Presidency to authorize the dropping of members somewhat unusual. It is recommended that a policy be written where the President and Presidency automatically authorize cancellation of**

**membership for any person 60 days late in dues payment. Such persons might be reinstated, but by payment of an additional fee.** (This is an example of a bylaw that can be modified by a policy, approved by the Presidency, without changing the bylaw itself – a more rigorous process.)

## Criterion Nine : COMMUNICATIONS

[illegible]

The Quarterly Newsletter and weekly bulletins are effective communications vehicles and reflects well on the profesional image of the association. Unfortunately, without a substantial reponse from surveys, it is difficult to evaluate the members needs and interests. A public relations plan and crisis management plan are more typical of a larger association, but it is especially **recommended that a crisis management policy – given the traveling of the President – be developed as essential.**

[illegible]



Criterion Ten continued

8. There is adequate security, disaster plan, and full documentation. x

Score : 65/80 (very good)

In general, the use of IT is effective – particularly considering the small size of the association. The Web site is well-designed.

**It is suggested that the AMC consider installing a 'Chat Room' where members are encourage to submit anonymous problems for discussion. (Can this help reduce member apathy?)**

**The President has an excellent idea of expanding the data base to include case histories. In time, the association can/should charge a fee for access.** Perhaps no fee for recent contributors of case histories, a modest fee for members, and a higher fee for non-members would be workable and generate another source for income (and sustainable maintenance of the data base).

**Criterion Eleven : PUBLIC POLICY ADVOCACY**

Purpose : Does the association leadership identify issues related to its members, develop public policy positions, and conduct programs for advocacy of these positions?

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1. Does the association regularly identify government or regulatory issues affecting members?					x					
2. Does the association utilize its expertise to advise government agencies?						x				
3. Surveys and research data are utilized to establish association's authority?					x					
4. The association has a clear, written procedure for developing public policy?				x						
5. The association has mechanisms for timely distribution of information to government.						x				
6. There is evidence that lawmakers and regulators are aware of the association and its issues.				x						
7. There is evidence that the association's public policy advocacy is effective.				x						
8. The association has been effective in forming coalitions with other associations.				x						

Score : 30/80 (neutral pending review)

Comments and recommendations:

The Evaluator is aware that the Web Site is utilized to promote member awareness of issues related to government and regulation, insufficient information supports a higher

#### Criterion Eleven continued

rating at this time. Pending further investigation, the above rating may be revised in the final report.

#### **Criterion Twelve : SELF-REGULATION**

Purpose : Does the association promote international standards, supported by a Code of Ethics and Certification?

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1. The association has developed standards that conform to international standards.									x	
2. Analysis and research for standards is supported by adequate documentation.										
										( NA/ new program in place)
3. A Code of Ethics has been adopted										x
4. A Certification program has been adopted.										x
5. The association keeps the principles of transparency, accountability, and high professionalism.						x				
6. Self-regulation never creates an unfair advantage.								x		
7. The intent of self-regulation has been thoroughly explained and discussed with membership.								x		
8. Programs for self-regulation are regularly communicated to lawmakers and government regulators.										x

Score : 53/70 (very good)

#### Comments and recommendations

The association is to be highly commended for adopting a Code of Ethics and international standards supported by Certification. Since this is a new development, analysis and research on the impact of these standards cannot be expected but is recommended for the future. In parallel with accepting these standards is that the association maintain high professional standards, such as transparency in its operations.

#### **Financial reports are an area which transparency can be approved**

Communications and discussion on the intent of these program should be repeated advanced with the membership, particularly as the association considers the previously recommendations on dues and membership classification. Lawmakers and regulators should be included in the chain of communication, beyond the passive vehicle of the web site.

Again, the recent advances of the association, embracing international standards, are highly commendable and mark a new series of opportunities for significant development.

## SUMMARY

Based on a 11-year personal experience in applying this international standard for evaluating associations in developing countries, the Evaluator has been favorably impressed by much of the policy, structure, and operation of AMC as a relatively new association, a small but growing membership, quite small staff, and modest funding. There are some concerns about governance style, unpaid staff, transparency, and a passive membership.

However, as the association moves soon into a new round of strategic planning, and actively adopted international standards, the stage is set for considering major changes which will mark a critical transition from a simple membership society into a sustainable, professional society with all of the hallmarks for international acceptance as such.